RELIGIOUS GLEANINGS.

CHURCH NOTES AND NEWS GLEANED FROM MANY SOURCES.

The Rumored Discovery at Damascus of a New Manuscript of the Gospels—Its Possible Value—It May Prove to Be of the Utmost Importance.

The rumored discovery at Damascus of a new manuscript of the Gospels, in the form of a codex, dating from the Fourth century, is an event of a kind to set all scholars on the alert, says The London Times. It is true that the world is already in possession of two copies traceable to that period. But the variants in the text of Holy Writ are of such critical value that the importance of the latest find is very little affected by the existence of the Codex Sinaiticus and the Codex Vaticanus. For the present little can be said in regard to the newly discovered manuscript except that its recovery is understood to be due to the Archbishop of Nicodemia, who has recently earned a well deserved reputation by similar, though less momentous, researches in paleography. If the current report about the manuscript which he has now "unearthed from a Turkish library in Damascus" does not exaggerate the age of the document, it belongs to the middle of the Fourth century; or, in other words, is as old as the Codex Sinaiticus. The only fear is that, instead of being an independent version, it may prove to be simply a replica of that famous manuscript.

Whether it proves to be a duplicate of Konstantin Tischendorf's celebrated treasure, or, like the Codex Vaticanus, the Codex Alexandrinus and the Codex Edhraemi, an independent version, its importance to biblical critics is not easily exaggerated.

We are not told where the latest codex was found, but any one who knows the exaggerated value attached to the most ordinary movements of seekers of such treasures can understand why some reticence in this respect has been observed.

Since Tischendorf made his famous discovery, all the libraries of the Levant have been ransacked again and again by keen eyed paleographers, or by monks whose less educated zeal has been stimulated by the hope of gain. The monastery of Mount Athos—from which, and not from Alexandria, Cyrillus, patriarch of Constantinople, most probably obtained the "Alexandrian Codex," which he presented to Charles I, and which is now in the British museum—has been in an especial degree the hunting ground of such pious pilgrims. But nothing of any great value has been obtained either there or in the Italian religious houses. Now, like the seekers after the lost books of Livy, the hopes of codicists center, in a listless and half hearted way, around the closed doors of the Moslem mosques.

It is very unlikely, however, that the mosque libraries hold in their keeping books of greater importance than Arabic translations of mediæval histories, or collections of traditions, or commentaries on the Koran. But it is possible that in the seats of early Christianity something may have escaped the fanaticism or carelessness of the Mohammedan conquerors.

The Damascus Codex is likely to derive its value rather from agreement with, than contradiction of, its better known contemporaries.

The Confession of M. Eiffel.

An agent of the Paris McAll mission sends the following interesting item of intelligence about M. Eiffel, the engineer who built the famous Eiffel tower at the Paris exposition: .While the name of God is scarcely to be found in the Paris exposition, and the Christian religion has received no recognition from the government, we are happy to learn that M. Eiffel is a religious man. Toward the latter part of the summer he was in Switzerland, at Ormont-Dessus. When the members of the religious choral society of the village heard of his arrival in the town they went to serenade the great engineer with their religious and patriotic selections. M. Eiffel, moved by this manifestation, rose and said: "Dear friends, I am touched by the attention which you show me. I am the more deeply stirred because I discover that there are three sentiments among you which I also share: the love of God, the love of liberty, and the love of country. Wherever I find these I am happy."

When Mr. Edison was in Paris he ascended the Eiffel tower, and wishing to recognize especially this feature in the life of M. Eiffel, wrote in his album these words: "To M. Eiffel, the engineer, the courageous builder of a gigantic and original specimen of the art of modern engineering; a man who has the greatest respect and admiration for all engineers, and also for the greatest among them all, the blessed God."

George Muller's Famous Orphanage.

George Muller, who is now traveling and preaching among the Himalayas, has written the fiftieth annual report of his famous orphanage in Bristol, England. Since the institution was founded, he has received for it and spent $5,500,000; more than 100,000 persons have been entirely supported and educated, and tens of thousands materially assisted. Five large houses, capable of affording homes for more than 2,000 orphans, have been built at a cost of $575,000, and sixty-six schools are now maintained. Yet this great school and orphanage and home for the homeless has never been in debt, and has never asked for human aid more than to make a plain statement of its doings and condition.

Colored Episcopal Clergymen.

There are now in the Episcopal diocese of Virginia thirteen colored clergymen—two priests and eleven deacons. Eleven of these have seats in the diocesan council, with every right and privilege enjoyed by any other clergymen. The remaining two, recently ordained, have the right to seats as representing the colored missionary jurisdiction, and there is, under the present constitution, room for two more, the jurisdiction being entitled to four.

Mission Notes.

Through the efforts of Rev. Signor Angelini, about fifty societies have been organized, each supporting a mission in Italy. To the Brooklyn society has fallen the pleasant duty of caring for the Free church in Leghorn. Although so recently organized thirteen different churches are already represented in this society, with the prospect of more soon joining in the good work.

The Christians of Great Britain gave altogether to foreign missions last year $6,672,455.

Two missionaries, one in service on the Mosquito coast, Central America, the other in Labrador, are representatives of a family who for six generations—from 1736 downwards—have been laboring in one or another of the Moravian mission fields.

Congregational.

The membership of the Central Congregational church, Brooklyn, N. Y., now is 1,728. The home Sunday school has 1,096, and the Bethesda chapel school 1,298 scholars and teachers. The Chinese school has 75 names on its roll, and an average attendance of 50.

Col. Franklin Fairbanks, executor of the ex-Governor Erastus Fairbanks estate, has given from the estate $15,000 to the North Congregational church at St. Johnsbury, Vt., the income to be used for charities and the support of the church.

Protestant Episcopal.

Bishop Potter has decided against the organization of a new Episcopal church in the village of Mount Vernon, N. Y.

The Bishop of Newcastle, England, six years ago asked for a fund of £60,000 for promoting church extension in the populous districts of Tyneside, and for aiding in the restoration of churches throughout the diocese. A return just issued shows that the total sum raised for the object is £75,500.

Baptist.

Pastor C. H. Spurgeon spent his period of retirement at Mentone in the preparation of a commentary on St. Matthew's gospel.

Mr. Spurgeon's church received 310 new members on their baptism last year. The total membership is now set down as 5,354.

There are 95,000 Baptists in Tennessee.

One Wide River.

One wide river, all of us must cross;
One dark valley, all of us must pass;
Who shall be our pilot? Who shall be our guide?
Jesus Christ, our Saviour, who for us hath died.

One wide river, all of us must cross;
One dark valley, all of us must pass;
Peace! Be still, O troubled sea; angry waves, subside,
'Tis Christ the Master speaks, he who for us hath died.

One wide river, all of us must cross;
One dark valley, all of us must pass;
He is walking with me, I take his hand in mine;
You can trust him, brother, take his hand in thine.

One wide river, all of us must cross;
One dark valley, all of us must pass;
Jesus Christ will lead you; he will be your friend;
Trust him, then, my brother, even to the end.
—W. R. Walkley, A. M., in Christian Advocate.

GENERAL CHURCH NOTES.

The number of Christian churches in Constantinople is very large, namely 145. Fourteen of these are Protestant, 50 Greek Orthodox, 39 Armenian Orthodox 26 Roman, 3 Greek-Roman, 12 American-Roman, 1 Bulgarian. Four patriarchs of oriental churches and a Roman archbishop are residing in the capital of Mohammed's successor.

The first Protestant pastor to be admitted to the Academy of Moral and Political Science, in Paris, is Edmond de Pressense.

Bishop Walker, of North Dakota, has succeeded in raising the necessary funds for his gospel car. He has signed his contract with the Pullman Palace Car company for a car with a seating capacity of eighty persons and supplied with a robing room, pulpit and font. The car is to be of rich design. The bishop, with his car, will now be able to conduct confirmation services with appropriate surroundings in the barren country where few churches exist.

The phonograph has been put to a new use. A clergyman, the Rev. Mr. Horne, of Larchmont, has preached his own funeral sermon, in which he enumerated his faults, eulogized his wife, burst forth into weeping, and ended by giving out a hymn. The legend of the monastic corpse that rose from its bier to check and contradict the laudations which were being uttered by the preacher over the life just ended is thus to some extent made a fact. A literal voice from the grave has been heard at Larchmont, with what result in edification remains to be seen.

Henry M. Stanley's Opinion of the Work of Christian Missionaries in Africa—Mackay's Fruitful Labor in the Vineyard of the Dark Continent.

Mr. Stanley's latest published letter, addressed to a son in law of the late Dr. Livingstone, has a special interest for the friends of missions, as it deals with the course of events at Uganda, consequent on the death of Bishop Hannington. The facts given by the explorer, relating to the revolutionary upheavals which deposed the cruel Mwanga, have already been published, but it is interesting to note his opinion of the work of the C. M. S. missionaries there. Mr. Stanley says:

"What would have pleased Livingstone so much is that a body of Christians can become in twelve years so numerous and formidable as to depose the most absolute and powerful king in Africa and hold their own against any number of combinations hostile to them. What can a man wish better for a proof that Christianity is possible in Africa?

"I take this powerful body of native Christians in the heart of Africa—who prefer exile for the sake of their faith to serving a monarch indifferent or hostile to their faith—as more substantial evidence of the work of Mackay than any number of imposing structures clustered together and called a mission station would be. These native Africans have endured the most deadly persecutions. The stake and the fire, the cord and the club, the sharp knife and the rifle bullet have all been tried to cause them to reject the teachings they have absorbed. Staunch in their beliefs, firm in their convictions, they have held together stoutly and resolutely, and Mackay and Ashe may point to these with a righteous pride as the results of their labors to the good kindly people at home who trusted in them.

"I suppose you do not know Mackay personally. Well, he is a Scotchman—the toughest little fellow you could conceive. Young, too—probably 33 years or so, and bears the climate splendidly—even his complexion is uninjured—not Africanised yet by any means, despite twelve years' continued residence. These mission societies certainly contrive to produce extraordinary men. [illegible] of Scotchmen, can you tell me [illegible] they succeed oftener than other peop[illegible] Take Moffatt, Livingstone, Macka[illegible] real Scotchmen with the burr—th[illegible] stand pre-eminent above all other mis[illegible]naries, no matter of what nationality [illegible] is not because they are Scotchmen [illegible] they succeed; it is not because they [illegible] better men in any one way or the oth[illegible] physically, mentally, or morally [illegible] we may rest assured—but it is [illegible]ing have been more educated in [illegible]ing than all others. While I say [illegible] I review mentally all whom I know and have met, and I repeat the statement confidently. That one thing is duty.

"These missionaries, Moffat, Livingstone, Mackay, piously brought up, are taught among other things what duty is, what it means, not to yield to anything but strict duty. Thus Moffat can persevere for fifty years in doing his duty among the heathen; and Livingstone, having given his promise to Sir Roderick that he will do his best, thinks it will be a breach of his duty to return home before he finishes his work; and Mackay plods on, despite every disadvantage, sees his house gutted and his flock scattered, and yet, with an awful fear of breach of duty, clings with hopefulness to a good time coming, when the natives of the country will be able to tell out to each other the good news of 'Peace and good will to men.'"

RELIGIOUS NOTES.

During the past five years the Missouri Lutheran synod contributed $569,130 for all benevolent objects.

The British and Foreign Bible society has during the eighty-one years of its beneficent existence issued from its London house alone 29,000,000 complete Bibles, nearly 32,000,000 New Testaments and 12,845,000 portions of the Bible—altogether 72,500,000 books.

Forty-four thousand of the $50,000 needed to free St. Luke's hospital, New York city, from debt has been secured.

The ninth annual report of the Western New York branch of the Woman's auxiliary shows the receipt in money of $1,640.69 and the value of boxes distributed was $7,912.51.

Eli Jones, the widely known Friend preacher and philanthropist, died in South China, Me., Feb. 2, aged 83 years. He and his wife, Sybil Jones, began their missionary labors in 1840. After traveling all over this continent their tours were extended to Liberia, England, Ireland, Norway, Germany, Switzerland, France, Spain and the Holy Land.

The Central Young Men's Christian union of Springfield, Mass., voted to solicit funds for constructing a $60,000 building on a location costing $40,000. It was announced that $50,000 of the amount had already been pledged by ten gentlemen.

A deep religious interest is now prevailing in the Ohio Wesleyan university. Of the 907 students in attendance this term, 628 were reported as Christians on the Day of Prayer. Since that day 90 students have been added to the Christian list.

In New Zealand 95 per cent. of the population are believers in religion, according to a recent census.

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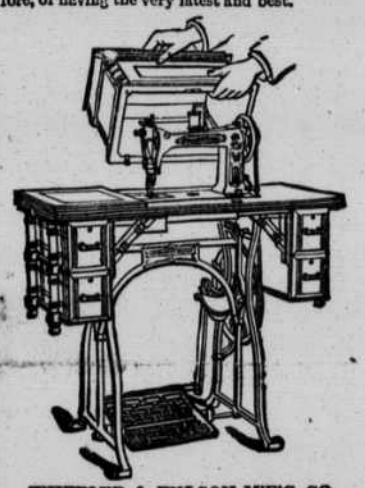
THE FIGURE "9."

The figure 9 in our dates will make a long stay. No man or woman now living will ever date a document without using the figure 9. It stands in the third place in 1890, where it will remain ten years and then move up to second place in 1900, where it will rest for one hundred years.

There is another "9" which has also come to stay. It is unlike the figure 9 in our dates in the respect that it has already moved up to first place, where it will permanently remain. It is called the "No. 9" High Arm Wheeler & Wilson Sewing Machine.

The "No. 9" was endorsed for first place by the experts of Europe at the Paris Exposition of 1889, where, after a severe contest with the leading machines of the world, it was awarded the only Grand Prize given to family sewing machines, all others on exhibit having received lower awards of gold medals, etc. The French Government also recognized its superiority by the decoration of Mr. Nathaniel Wheeler, President of the company, with the Cross of the Legion of Honor.

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